

CALGreen FAQ



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CALGreen is the California Green Building Standards Code (Title 24, Part 11, California Code of Regulations) designed to promote sustainability in construction by setting minimum environmental performance standards for buildings. It covers aspects like energy efficiency, water conservation, and indoor air quality. It is updated by the Building Standards Commission (BSC) on the same triennial cycle as the rest of Title 24, including an additional intervening cycle effective 18 months into each cycle with newly adopted changes.

Since AB130 has been signed into law in July 2025, future CALGreen code development will be paused for residential construction for the 2025 intervening cycle and the 2028 code cycle. More information about the provisions of AB130 is available [here](#).

The 2025 CALGreen Standards take effect January 1, 2026.

Key mandatory updates include:

Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging: New thresholds and electrical requirements for nonresidential, multifamily, hotel, and motel buildings.

Bicycle Parking: Significant changes for residential projects; minor adjustments for nonresidential projects.

Embodied Carbon: Requirements now apply to nonresidential projects 50,000 ft² or greater.

Indoor Air Quality: Updated CO₂ monitoring requirements for classrooms.



Where can you review the latest version of the CALGreen code language?

The 2025 version of the CALGreen Standards is posted on [ICC Digital Codes](#). Updates from the previous version are noted in red text.

In addition to the code language, Nonresidential and Residential CALGreen Guides as well as Checklists and Worksheets for compliance documentation are published on the BSC [CALGreen webpage](#).

Which projects need to comply with CALGreen?

Nearly all new construction, major renovations, and alterations for residential, nonresidential, and public buildings in California must comply with CALGreen. This includes both private and public sector projects.

See the tables at the start of each chapter for applicability. Triggering thresholds for nonresidential additions are 1,000 ft² and alterations over \$200,000 in permit value. Hospitals and schools (public elementary and secondary schools, and community colleges) are required to comply, although not every measure is applicable. Certain measures have minimum area triggers such as the embodied carbon requirements for nonresidential and school projects 50,000 ft² of combined floor area (new, existing, and altered) and greater.

What is the role of CALGreen in the context of California's climate goals?

CALGreen supports California's climate action goals by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, conserving resources, and promoting sustainable building practices. It aligns with the state's broader environmental and energy policies.

What are the key categories of CALGreen?

CALGreen is divided into five divisions within both the Residential and Nonresidential Mandatory Measures Chapters:

- › **Planning and Design:** Focuses on site planning and design strategies for sustainable development.
- › **Energy Efficiency:** Sets standards for energy conservation in buildings.
- › **Water Efficiency:** Addresses measures to reduce water usage.
- › **Material Conservation and Resource Efficiency:** Includes guidelines for using sustainable materials and reducing waste.
- › **Environmental Quality:** Focuses on improving indoor air quality and reducing pollutants.



What are the mandatory measures in CALGreen?

Mandatory measures are requirements that all projects must meet, such as specific energy and water efficiency standards, construction waste reduction, and certain indoor air quality measures.

What are voluntary or elective measures in CALGreen?

Voluntary measures are additional, optional measures that go beyond the mandatory requirements. Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJs) may adopt an entire Tier, either 1 or 2, or specific measures as part of a jurisdiction's reach codes (beyond mandatory statewide codes). AHJs must conduct analysis to determine if desired Tier 1 or 2 measures related to energy efficiency are cost effective for their regions prior to adoption. These measures are outlined in Appendix A4 for Residential and Appendix A5 for Nonresidential.

Who enforces CALGreen?

AHJs will enforce CALGreen measures in design documents through the plan check process and certain measures may also be verified in construction during inspections. It is important to check with the AHJ's building department to understand how specific CALGreen measures should be documented by the project team. Several measures, including embodied carbon, are verified by reviewing declaration statements signed by the responsible

designer and the worksheets found in Chapter 8 of the code (or [here](#) by filtering for "Checklist/Worksheet" under the Type heading).

Most AHJs require a completed CALGreen Checklist be submitted on plan sets as part of the permit process. These can be found on a building department's website or other checklist templates are available [here](#).

Is there a special certification needed to implement CALGreen measures?

No special certification is required to implement CALGreen measures, but compliance with the code is mandatory for all applicable projects.

How is compliance with CALGreen achieved and documented?

Designing a project to meet CALGreen involves understanding the specific requirements applicable to the project and incorporating them into design and construction documents. Project teams should confirm which requirements apply to their scope as early as possible in the design process to inform design decisions and budget considerations. Incorporation later in the design process is more difficult and may result in increased costs and schedule delays.

CALGreen compliance is documented by including details and notes on plans, specification language, signed declarations, and checklists. The BSC publishes checklists and worksheets for nonresidential projects



that should be used to document applicability and note location within design documents. The Department of Housing and Community Development publishes a list of CALGreen requirements for residential buildings. CALGreen checklists and worksheets can be found [here](#). It is important that the project team is familiar with the code to make sure applicable measures are incorporated into the project design plans. As the design progresses, the design team is responsible for ensuring that documentation is accurate and up to date. Conducting a thorough CALGreen review by the designer of record during design is recommended. Project teams should consider including their own inspections during construction site visits to ensure project compliance.

Are there any incentives for exceeding CALGreen standards?

DGS does not provide incentives for exceeding CALGreen standards. However, some AHJs may incentivize exceeding certain CALGreen measure thresholds or meeting voluntary Tiers. These may include expedited plan check, discounted building

permitting fees, utility rebate programs or enhanced marketability. Check with the AHJ to see if incentives are available and are applicable to your project, as programs are updated regularly.

How does CALGreen compare to other green building standards?

CALGreen is a specific green building code in California, whereas other voluntary standards like LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) or BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) have broader, international scopes. CALGreen focuses on state-specific needs and regulations and is written in language to enhance enforceability.

CALGreen compliance can provide a streamlined documentation option for certifications like LEED under the [California Alternative Compliance Paths \(ACP\)](#) or [GreenPoint Rated](#) for residential projects, which is designed to align with CALGreen and other California building codes.

Additional Resources

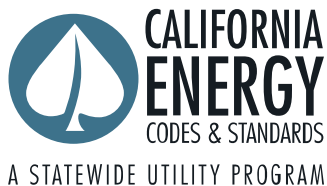
[CALGreen Information](#)

[California Building Standards Commission \(CBSC\)](#)

[California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 11](#)
[California Energy Commission \(CEC\)](#)

[Energy Code Ace](#)

[Local Energy Codes](#): Local municipal building departments for region-specific guidance.



The Codes & Standards program aims to advance the adoption and effective implementation of energy efficiency measures and building practices to lock in long-term energy and GHG savings to meet California's ZNE, decarbonization and climate goals. The program recognizes that codes and standards are one of the most effective pathways to ensuring sustained market transformation—and that key to making them work well are well-informed industry professionals and consumers.



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